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Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare

Officers Chosen at Organizational Meeting

At its first meeting on Nov. 2, the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare elected Senator Gary Aklestad chairman and Representative Tom Bulger vice chairman.

Administration of Welfare Programs Discussed

The Committee heard presentations on welfare programs including:

- A review of current eligibility and benefit standards for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC), the General Assistance Program, the General Relief Medical Program, and the state Medicaid Program;
- A comparison of Montana welfare standards with standards used in other states;
- A general analysis of the adequacy of benefits under the AFDC and General Assistance Programs;
- An analysis of multiple program benefit levels;
- An examination of who receives welfare benefits and the reasons why they seek public assistance; and
- A review of current findings regarding the incidence of fraud, welfare abuse, and administrative error in awarding public assistance benefits.

Study Objectives

The Committee voted to:

- limit the study on welfare by concentrating on three public assistance programs: AFDC, General Assistance, and the General Relief Medical Program;
- study Medicaid in a limited form, concentrating primarily on eligibility; and
- focus the study mainly on examining the overall problem of welfare in Montana, including the problem of welfare dependency, rising welfare caseloads, and the increasing costs of welfare services; reviewing eligibility standards for AFDC and General Assistance

Programs and study options for change in the current standards for eligibility; studying the current system for administration of county welfare services; looking at alternative systems for administration of county welfare program; and evaluating the experience with work programs in Montana and other states.

Next Meeting Date Not Set

The Subcommittee will hold its next meeting sometime in March.

Joint Interim Subcommittee on Basic Education

Action Group Meeting in Lewistown

Five members of the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Basic Education attended the Board of Education's first Action Group meeting on Oct. 29 and 30 at Lewistown to begin the review of ac-

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creditation standards mandated in HJR 16. Participating in the activities were Subcommittee members Senators Chet Blaylock, H. W. Hammond, and Greg Jergeson and Representatives Ted Schye and John Phillips and Legislative Council staff researcher Andrea Merrill.

As an opening activity, the groups were addressed by spokespersons who discussed a number of "overarching" issues related to the standards such as special education, educational equity, gifted and talented, and Native American concerns. Each group met later to develop a goal statement and preliminary drafts of student outcomes in their curriculum area. Each group also selected dates and places for its next two meetings, which are expected to be in early December and late January. Suggestions of standards are expected to be finalized then.

In drafting desired student outcomes, the Action Groups were asked to consider, for grades K-3, 4-8, and 9-12:

- skills and concepts to be learned;
- attitudes to be developed; and
- behaviors to be acquired.

Environmental Quality Council

MEPA Rules Reviewed

The Environmental Quality Council hosted a public workshop on Dec. 4 to review proposed revisions to the administrative rules implementing the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The EQC developed the proposed rule changes in cooperation with executive branch agencies over the past year and a half as part of a project to identify ways to improve the state's environmental review process.

Forest Practices, Watershed Groups to Meet

In late November, the Environmental Quality Council appointed members to two committees that will assist the EQC in developing information under House Joint Resolution 49, the interim study of forest practices and watershed effects. The committees, titled the Watershed Effects Working Group (WEWG) and the Best Management Practices Technical Committee (BMPTC), include representatives of the timber industry, landowners, loggers, public interest groups, educators, government agencies, and others involved in forest and watershed management. WEWG will hold its first meeting Dec. 11, and BMPTC will meet Dec. 16. Both meetings will be held in Room 405 of the Capitol and will begin at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting of the full Environmental Quality Council will be in January.

Legislative Audit Committee

Reports Reviewed

The Legislative Audit Committee met on Dec. 4 to review and release these reports:

Financial-Compliance Audits

- Department of Commerce, Economic Development Board

Performance Audits

- Agency Use of Contracted Services

Performance Audit Survey

- Department of Administration, State Personnel Division

Contract Audits

- Department of Commerce, Coal Board Grants
- Department of Commerce, Board of Housing
- Legislative Branch

Montana State Senate

Montana House of Representatives

Legislative Council

Legislative Consumer Committee

Environmental Quality Council

Legislative Fiscal Analyst

Legislative Auditor

The committee also discussed the *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the State of Montana (Statewide Audit)*.

Copies of all reports are available from the Office of the Legislative Auditor (Room 135, State Capitol, Helena, MT 59620, telephone 444-3122) upon request.

Legislative Consumer Committee

Meeting Slated in Kalispell

The Big Mountain Room in Cavanaugh's Motor Inn at Kalispell will be the location for the meeting of the Legislative Consumer Committee at 8:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 11.

Officials of Pacific Power and Light Company will explain the proposed merger of that company with Utah Power and Light.

Other topics on the agenda will include an update of the Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline and a stipulation in the Mountain Bell Tax Reform docket.

Legislative Council

Meeting Planned Dec. 12

The Legislative Council plans to meet December 12. The preliminary agenda includes the following:

Post Session Deadlines

The Council has contacted the office of the Governor and Secretary of State concerning

whether there would be any problem associated with changing the current constitutional deadlines for gubernatorial consideration of measures submitted at or after the Legislature has gone home. If it seems wise, the Council may propose an amendment to the Constitution to provide a uniform time period for both in-session and after-session consideration.

Revision of Session Law Format

The statutes now provide that session laws be submitted to the Secretary of State and assigned a chapter number in serial order as received except that bills providing for appropriations are excluded and are listed only by bill number. Increasingly, this distinction is breaking down as substantive bills of one sort or another contain appropriations as well as other material. The question is whether to recommend changing this procedure to assign chapter numbers to all enacted bills. In a related matter, the Council is exploring the possibility of changing the way material stricken from existing law is presented in the session laws. Session laws now show material that has been added to existing laws but not material deleted from the laws. The session laws are the official laws of the state and would be much more useful with this additional information included.

To Consider Hiring Process

In response to a request by several members, the Council will consider issues related to the hiring process it follows for staff directors. To be considered are the role of Council, legal concerns with selection processes, and structured interview procedures.

Old Legislative Publications

The Council has a substantial inventory of old legislative publications that have been stored for many years. The question is whether they can be dispersed or discarded since there seems little demand and most are available from other sources.

Review of Legislative Intern Program

The Council has undertaken a review of the Legislative Intern Program and will review preliminary findings prior to deciding whether to proceed further with the review.

In addition, the Council will consider a number of administrative matters within its area of responsibility and any other issues that may be suggested by members.

Researcher on Leave to Aid Institutions

Lois Menzies, a senior researcher, has taken a temporary assignment at the Department of Institutions as project manager of the Governor's Criminal Justice and Corrections Advisory Council. She will return to the Council staff next December.

Library to Move

The Legislative Council library and the proofreading staff will exchange rooms during the coming month. The move is intended to remedy the shortage of space in the library and to move library materials out of another office. The new library quarters will offer more flexibility for shelving and electrical needs. The library will continue to offer assistance during this period. In case of inability to help because of the move, the staff will refer your request to another library that can provide the information within your time frame.

Ballot Issues Reviewed

- Return property tax appraisal and assessment to counties I.
- Return property tax appraisal and assessment to counties II.
- Reduce size of Legislature to 60 representatives and 30 senators.

Annotations Contract Let

The contract for printing the 1987 Annotations to the 1987 Montana Code Annotated was awarded Nov. 30 to the low bidder, Advanced Litho Printing of Great Falls. Although SB 98, requested by the Legislative Council, applied the in-state printing preference to the bid for the first time, Advanced Litho was the low bidder without application of the preference.

Legislative Finance Committee

Subcommittees Hear Reports on Study Topics

At the meeting of the Legislative Finance Committee on Nov. 20, short meetings of the K-12 Education, Welfare Reform, and Property Assessment Subcommittees preceded the full committee session. Several of the issues discussed during those meetings are briefly summarized.

K-12 Education Subcommittee

The K-12 Education subcommittee heard four reports from the staff of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst including how the previous subcommittee determined that the cost of meeting the accreditation standards is 63% of the total cost of regular programs. The staff then gave a briefing on the progress of the new study, which is costing the accreditation standards. A third report focused on Montana's present funding system and shifts in funding sources. The fourth report provided the subcommittee with options to be considered when designing a public school funding structure. These reports are available from the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst.

Welfare Reform Subcommittee

The Welfare Reform Subcommittee reviewed and adopted a revised workplan which will focus primarily on two major areas: (1) conduct, in cooperation with the Legislative Council staff who are working with the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare, a survey of demographic information on current and former welfare recipients; and (2) an analysis of the costs and service utilization of the primary care portion of the Medicaid program.

The subcommittee also heard reports from the staff of the Governor's Human Service Delivery Task Force and of the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare regarding the direction and activities of those committees.

Workers' Compensation Division

As required by HB 373, the committee reviewed proposed additions to the staff of the Division of Workers' Compensation. The division proposes adding 9.0 FTE and related expenses totaling \$266,045 of state workers' compensation funds in fiscal 1988 to alleviate excessive workload and reduce claims-processing time lags.

Coal Tax Oversight Subcommittee

Meeting Scheduled Dec. 11

Reports on the use of coal severance tax funds from the Department of Commerce for county land planning, the State Library Commission, the Montana Arts Council, the Coal Board, and the Office of Public Instruction will be heard by the Coal Tax Oversight Subcommittee on Friday, Dec. 11. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in Room 104 of the Capitol.

Revenue Oversight Committee

Potential Gasoline Tax Evasion Viewed Under HJR 56

At its fourth meeting of the interim on Nov. 20, the Revenue Oversight Committee heard reports and discussion of the possible incidence of evasion of the gasoline license tax on gasoline sold for export from Montana. Study of this subject was requested by HJR 56, approved by the 1987 Legislature.

The Department of Revenue and representatives of gasoline refiners and distributors offered several options for addressing this potential problem. The Committee directed staff to draft legislation incorporating these proposed solutions for further review and discussion.

Problems of Protested Beneficial Use Taxes Heard

Representative Bob Marks, Senator Tom Beck, and several school district superintendents discussed the financial plight of certain school districts caused by the protests of beneficial use taxes levied on BPA transmission lines.

The Committee recognized the magnitude of the problem and directed staff to work with interested parties to define potential solutions. Staff will report at the Committee's next meeting.

Other Subjects Discussed

Among other topics to come before the Committee were:

- a report from the State Tax Appeal Board on the status of the 1986 and 1987 property tax appeals and on the use of hearings officers;
- perceived inequities in motor vehicle assessments resulting from implementing SB 200;
- an update on meetings between the Department of Revenue and oil and gas producers concerning the oil and gas net proceeds law; and
- a review of the sales tax data base study plan proposed by the staff.

Next Meeting Jan. 15

Friday, Jan. 15, will be the date of the next meeting of the Revenue Oversight Committee.

Committee on Indian Affairs

First Meeting Scheduled Dec. 12

The organizational meeting of the Committee on Indian Affairs is set for 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, in Room 104 of the Capitol.

After electing its officers, the Committee will select study topics and will receive an update on issues previously under study. Presentations will be given by Bea Lunda, Indian child welfare specialist for the State of Montana; Clay Smith, assistant attorney general; John North, chief legal counsel to the Governor; Louis Clayborn, state coordinator for Indian affairs; and a member of the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission.

The Committee seeks input on Indian/non-Indian relations from interested persons and organizations, acts as liaison between the Indian people and the Legislature, encourages tribal-state and tribal-local government cooperation, holds hearings both on and off reservations to promote better understanding between the tribes and public agen-

cies, and encourages participation of Indian people in committee meetings.

Water Policy Committee

Meeting Scheduled Dec. 11

The Water Policy Committee will meet at 9 a.m. Friday, Dec. 11, in Room 108 of the Capitol to discuss water rights adjudication, water research, and other topics. The meeting will open with a presentation on the proposed design for the water adjudication study being undertaken by the firm of Saunders, Snyder, Ross and Dickson. This discussion will be followed by staff reports on the water rights claim examination rules and recent litigation.

The morning session will conclude with a presentation on the status of state-owned water projects by representatives of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

The afternoon session will focus on water research. Representatives of the Groundwater Information Center, the Water Resources Research Center, and the Yellow Bay Biological Station will report on the status of their programs. This will be followed by a report and panel discussion on possible directions for water research programs in Montana.

Legislative Committee on University System Funding

Staff Visits to University Units

A progress report presented to the University Funding Study Committee at a meeting on Nov. 19 pointed out that data is being gathered on the campus of each of the six units of the University System. Staff members have visited Montana State University, University of Montana, Northern Montana College, and Eastern Montana College. Montana Tech and Western Montana College will be visited during the first week of December.

Current university funding methods were reviewed and discussed. The Committee was presented constitutional and statutory references related to the roles of the legislative branch and the executive branch, including the Board of Regents. Representative John Mercer and Board of Regents Chairman Dennis Lind will present their analysis of these references at the next meeting of the Committee in January.

Western Legislative Conference

Resolutions Adopted at Annual Meeting

The Western Legislative Conference (WLC), Council of State Governments, approved 25 resolutions

at its annual meeting in Honolulu on Sept. 23. Members of the WLC are the 13 western states, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas Islands.

Among the resolutions approved and the committees in which they originated

Executive Committee

- Authorized a letter to 1988 Presidential candidates pointing out that none of them accepted the invitation to meet with the WLC membership and emphasizing the importance of the West, which holds the key to current and future U.S. energy, natural resources, and security interests and which is the U.S. gateway to the Pacific Rim.
- Urged the sharing of fingerprint identification information through automated fingerprint information systems

Environment and Hazardous Materials Committee

- Urged an acid rain control program be developed cooperatively between the governments of the United States, Canada, and other countries.
- Urged the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend to Congress that state regulation of oil and gas exploration and production wastes continue to be exempt from federal preemption.

Land and Energy Committee

- Urged the federal government to encourage the prudent use of domestic energy resources.
- Urged Congress to support and cooperate with western states' initiatives to acquire and/or exchange federal lands, to require the U. S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to report certain withdrawals and classifications, and to require the Secretary of the Interior to take certain actions.
- Urged Congress to adopt legislation to maintain the correct grazing fee formula and to recognize the compatibility of good livestock management and the natural environment

Water Policy Committee

- Supported quantification, negotiation, and appropriate physical solutions to federal reserved water rights disputes and federal funds for evidentiary costs in reserved rights litigation.
- Urged that federal groundwater legislation protect the state's primary role in groundwater management.
- In maintaining the productive capacity of irrigated lands, urged Congress to study long-term effects of irrigation on agricultural lands.

Ocean Resources Committee

- Urged Congress to (1) establish the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as an independent organization of the government, (2) enact a National Seabed Hard Minerals Act, and (3) review and consider the findings and recommendations in the Western Legislative Conference's 1987 Report: *Pacific*

States and Territories Ocean Agenda: Managing a Vast Resource Frontier.

- Urged Congress to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 regarding federal activities that are subject to the federal consistency provisions of the act and support state coastal management programs.
- Urged Congress to take steps to promote and support the application of satellite technology in the fishing industry and urged Congress to restore federal funds to the Regional Aquaculture Center Program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and to expand membership in the Aquaculture Regional Center.

Economic Development and International Trade Committee

- Requested the Congress to adopt competitiveness and international trade strategies in its efforts to strengthen America's international trade activities and relationships.
- Urged the enhancement of the U. S. Customs and Immigration Services.
- Urged federal actions to improve balance of trade deficits.
- Opposed unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments.
- Requested Congress to take all measures necessary to provide for the regulation of gaming wagering on Indian lands.
- Opposed increases in federal excise taxes.
- Asked each presidential candidate to announce a detailed plan to balance the budget.

Health and Education Committee

- Urged the U.S. Department of Education and the Surgeon General to develop public education programs to combat AIDS.
- Urged increased federal funding for the Indian Health Service and Public Health Service programs.
- Urged Congress to expand availability of long-term and home health services under the Medicare program and to enact legislation similar to IRAs to allow citizens to establish ac-

counts for their own long-term care and home health care on a tax deductible basis.

- Supported federal legislation to compensate Japanese-Americans and individuals of Aleut ancestry interned during World War II and to compensate the people of Guam for their losses during World War II.


Western States Legislative Forestry Task Force

Meeting at Carmel, California, Jan. 8, 9, 10

Following an informal, no-host gathering on Jan. 8, the Western States Legislative Forestry Task Force will begin its formal meeting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 9, with a tour of the area of last spring's Pebble Beach fire that destroyed 32 high-value homes in the urban/forest interface. The tour is being arranged and will be hosted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire. In order to aid in the prevention of fires in similarly situated communities, the Task Force members hope to learn how the fire started and the combination of factors that caused its rapid spread. Also considered will be the roles of terrain, architecture, roofing materials, road design, water supply availability, and coordination among several fire protection jurisdictions involved.

Topics for discussion during the public meeting will include the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, implication of financial restraints and foreign competition on forest management, the U. S. Forest Service fire recovery program in California, forest policy direction in British Columbia, key forest-oriented legislation in Congress, and the AER-Forest Industry Communications Network. Video tapes of the disastrous 1987 fire seasons in California and Oregon will be viewed.

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6	7 CSG Annual Meeting Boston	8 	9	10	11 Legislative Audit Committee Rm. 104	12 Legislative Council Comm. on Indian Affairs
13	14	15	16 BMPTC	17 Leg. Consumer Committee, Kallispell Water Policy Committee WEWG	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31		

All Meetings Subject to Change!

January

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

All Meetings Subject to Change!

3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	X	X	X	X	1 New Year's Day	2
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		X	X	X	Revenue Oversight Committee	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

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